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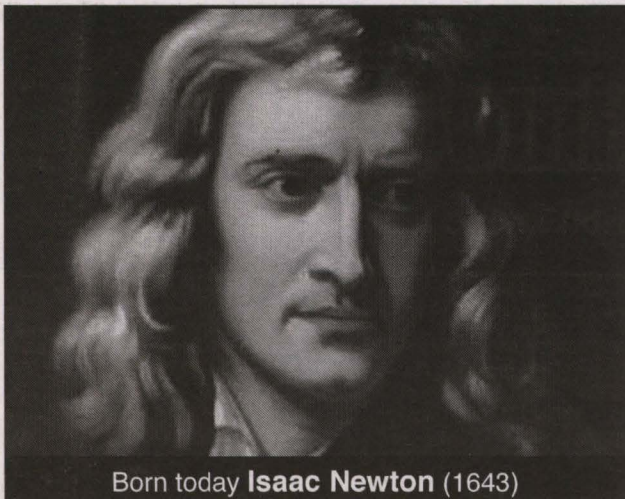
the Douglas College newspaper since 1976

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**PLUS** Everything you wanted to know  
about New Year's resolutions inside!





Born today **Isaac Newton** (1643)

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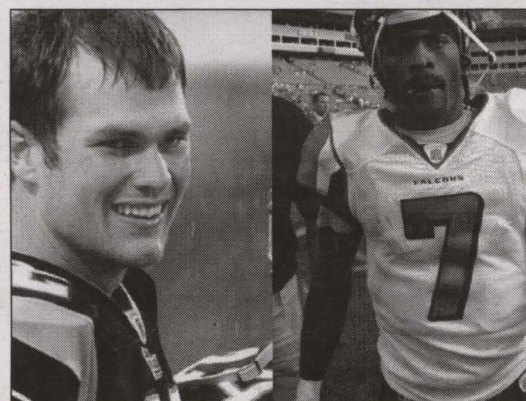
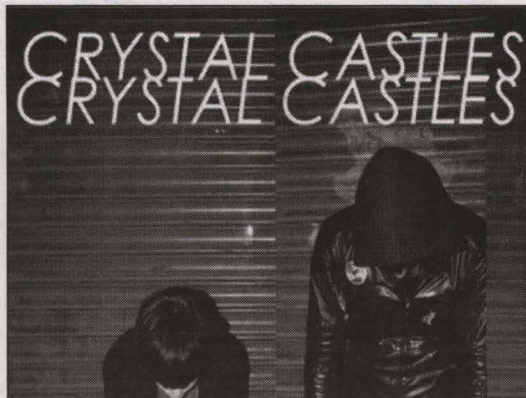
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## THE OTHER PRESS

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# WHO WE ARE

The Other Press has been Douglas College's student newspaper since 1976. Since 1978 we have been an autonomous publication, independent of the student union. We are a registered society under the Society Act of British Columbia, governed by an eight-person board of directors appointed by and from our staff. Our head office is located in the New Westminster campus.

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The Other Press reserves the right to choose what we will publish, and we will not publish material that is hateful, obscene, or condones or promotes illegal activities. Submissions may be edited for clarity and brevity if necessary. All images used are copyright to their respective owners.



## Promises to keep?



**Garth McLennan**  
Editor in Chief

Since becoming the managing editor of The Other Press, I've had a little difficulty coming up with a compelling letter to the editor, or 'Lettitor' as we've grown accustomed to calling the space you're reading now, each week. At first glance, it doesn't seem like that complex of a task; after all, I wrote five or six articles per week back in my sports editor days.

However, it feels different now. Penning the lead article every week comes with, to me at least, a certain amount of responsibility. Logistically, this should be the very first article you see when you thumb through the pages of your esteemed student newspaper, and because of that, I try my best each week to come up with a lettitor that hopefully makes you think, maybe makes you laugh a little bit and perhaps most importantly, makes you want to keep on reading through the rest of the paper.

So for the very first edition of The Other Press in 2011, I had my plans for this week's lettitor all mapped out. My theme was going to be about New Year's resolutions. It seemed to really fit the time of year; just about everyone has an opinion on them and I figured I had something to say on the subject.

It was to my dismay however, when I found out that several other writers were planning on speaking at length about New Year's resolutions as well, and sure enough, there are three or four very strong articles on the topic to be found in the following pages. Upon reflection, it's a good thing that we had those articles (after all, they are good stories). They

made me give some good thought to resolutions. I, like many people, made my own list of resolutions this year and again like many people, I fully intend to live up to them (for now at least).

I've seen and heard a lot of negative vibes surrounding New Year's resolutions though. So, which are they: good or bad? Essential for every December 31<sup>st</sup> or a waste of time?

I get both sides of the argument, and I know that the vast majority of people out there have a tendency to put their resolutions on hold indefinitely or simply abandon them altogether, but I'm still going to say that on the whole, it's good to make resolutions. We all have baggage, and I don't think anyone realistically believes that the passing into a new year is going to wipe any slate completely clean, but there's nothing wrong with trying to create a fresh start.

I think that what the whole notion of a New Year's resolution boils down to is our ability to hope. We all want tomorrow to look a little brighter, and even if we don't wind up adhering to our resolutions, there's nothing wrong with hoping for a better tomorrow.

HARD

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**Anyone can get published in the Other Press!** Just email your story to the appropriate section editor from the list on the right. Please send your file as an MS Word doc file, and include your full name, email address, and word count. The weekly deadline for submissions is Wednesday night for publication the following Monday. Letters to the Editor and "time-sensitive" articles (weekend news, sports, and cultural reviews) will be accepted until Saturday at noon and can be submitted to the editor at [editor@theotherpress.ca](mailto:editor@theotherpress.ca)

Submissions will be edited for clarity and style. The Other Press will pay \$50 to any student who writes an article of at least 1,000 words for the "features" section. Submit story ideas to the Editor in Chief. Offer good once per semester per student. The Other Press holds weekly staff meetings at 6 PM on Mondays in room 1020 of the New Westminster campus. All interested students are welcome.

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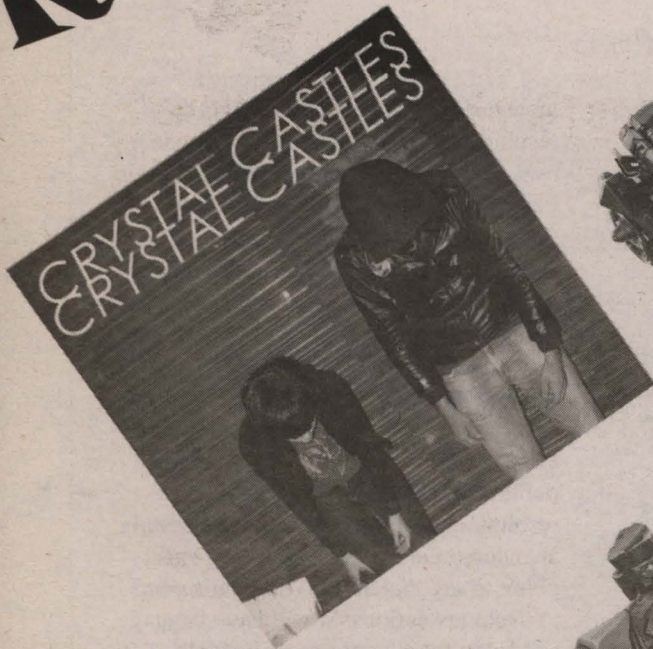
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## What's happening in

By Maria Asselin-Roy,  
Staff Reporter

2011 has slowly crept up on us, and now it's already here. Vancouver is expecting to go through economic changes, play host to several events including sports, galleries and exhibits, concerts, and much more. 2011 is expected to be a year of growth in all aspects.

Vancouver and the rest of Canada will be expecting minimized economic growth. This will be a good change for Canada in the sense that there will be some uplifting relief from last years economic crisis, which Canada handled fairly well compared to some other countries. The economy has yet to fully recover, but business owners are pleased by saying "A new year means a fresh start."

Douglas Porter, BMO's Capital Market's deputy chief economist, predicts that BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan will lead Canada's growth with an average GDP increase of about 3.5 percent because of commodity prices, as well as less reliance on the U.S economy. Because of less reliance, business owners are expecting to be slightly more successful in 2011 as the stock market is trying to dig itself out of a hole.

2011 is most definitely going to be a year of entertainment. As for

movies, Harry Potter fans will be thrilled to see the final movie of the series "*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part Two*" and probably a little heartbroken as the series comes to an end. Also, Johnny Depp will be starring in an animated film called "Rango" which is expected to hit theatres in March. Other exciting animated films include "Cars 2" and "Kung Fu Panda 2." Transformers fans are excited for "Transformers 3" starring the original cast (sans Megan Fox) and more robots than the first two movies; the expected release date is June 29. Something extremely exciting is coming out for the Lord of the Rings fans; "The Hobbit" is hoping to be released on New Years Eve in 2011. Peter Jackson will be producing this film and it will serve as a prequel to the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

Contributing to the entertainment, Vancouver has an exciting list of upcoming concerts. Interpol will be playing at the Orpheum Theatre on January 27; Eric Clapton will be performing at the Rogers Arena on February 25. If you're into a harder style of music, Crystal Castles will be performing at the Commodore Ballroom on March 7. There are hundreds more artists that will be performing throughout the year including Bon Jovi, My Chemical Romance, Taylor Swift, Mogwai, and Goo Goo Dolls just to name a

few. For more information on concert listings for 2011, check out ticket master.

Sporting events will take a significant place in 2011 as well. The Vancouver Sun Run will take place on Sunday, April 17. This will be the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Sun Run. Last year's Sun Run had over 50,000 people participating, and this year is expecting even more. This is Canada's largest 10km run and the second largest run in North America. Vancouver will also have its annual marathon, hosted by BMO. The marathon will take place on Sunday, May 1. The race is a huge event and is run purely by volunteers. There is a full marathon, half marathon, and an 8 km run. The race will include prizes, merchandise, promotions, and much more. For registration and more information on the race, please visit [www.bmovanmarathon.com](http://www.bmovanmarathon.com). Of course hockey and other sporting events will be popular this year so for information or tickets on the Canucks and more, visit ticket master!

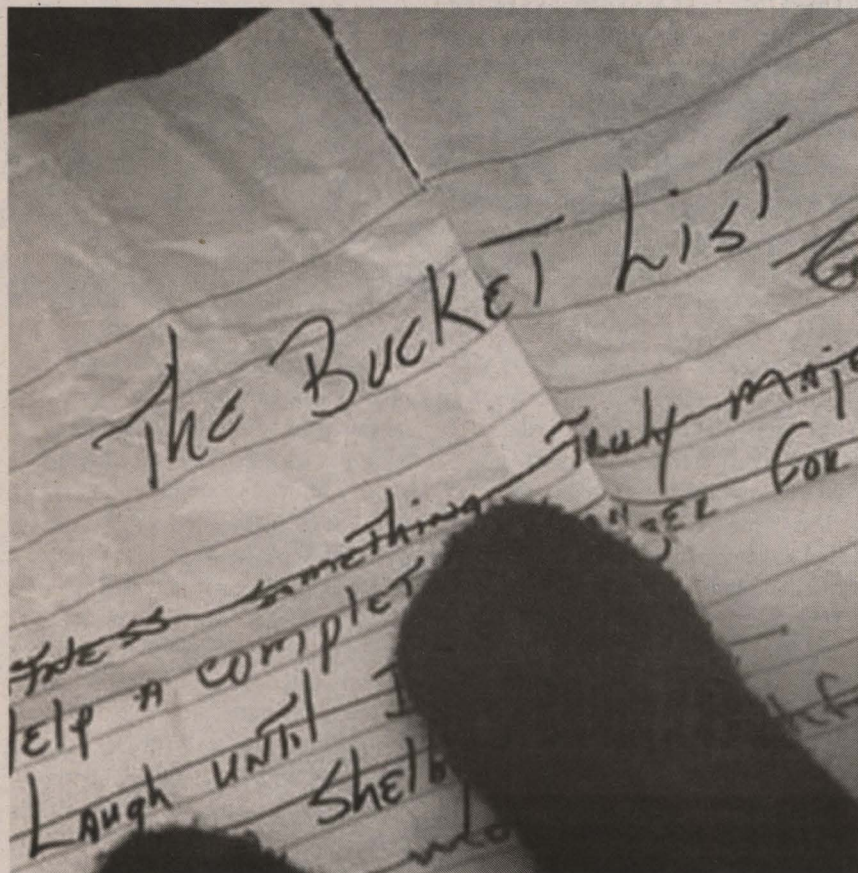
The Vancouver Art Gallery will be hosting a few exciting new galleries this upcoming year. From February 12 to September 25 Ken Lum will be exhibiting his work. He is an artist from Vancouver who will be showing works from public spaces, sculptures from rented furniture, studio portrait photographs, paintings, and interesting mazes

of mirrors with in-scripted texts. Another new gallery event is titled WE: Vancouver-12 Manifestos for the City. This event examines Vancouver through its range of practices, actions, and ideas that make this city what it is. The exhibition includes works of over more than 40 Vancouver based producers displaying various forms of architecture, showing the different ways in which humans occupy their environment. Other exhibitions can be found on the Vancouver Art Gallery website.

With all of these listed events and many more, we can tell that 2011 will be a well fulfilled year. Vancouver has all of the makings of a successful and fun year, but according to various sources what Vancouver and the rest of Canada would really like to see in 2011 is peace in the Middle East with better governance and enhanced security, lower taxes for hard working Canadians, the RCMP to use less excessive force. Also, sources say that the government will work on the fact that Canadians should be given the legal right to buy insurance for private medical treatment in 2011. These issues will not fully come to a halt in 2011, but we are working on improving these conditions. Nonetheless, 2011 will be a year of economic progress and full of innovative and exciting things to look forward to.



## Planning long term: bucket lists



By Kennedy Kierans

"Everything but the kitchen sink." That was a phrase we used when growing up to talk about something, like a new car, that had pretty much everything you could think of or want. Well, now there's a new term in the vocabulary, but it's about buckets, not sinks.

Bucket lists are lists of everything you want to do in your life. They are not resolutions, because they aren't things you necessarily can or will get done in the next year. They are just lists of things that you want to accomplish *sometime* in your life. And, most important, the things on your bucket list do not have to be big or major things, like get a PhD. They just have to be important or interesting to you.

Bucket lists let you dream on a big scale, and they help you set goals, figure out what you really want, and bring more of that really-important-to-you stuff into your life. If you share lists with friends or family, it can also tell you about what is important to them, and they know you better too.

So, at the beginning of a new year, why not start one? If you have one, why not pull it out and update it?

You will want to at least look it over, to make sure that it still reflects you and what you care about – you may have new interests or priorities, or you may be able to cross off some of the things on the old list, because you've done them.

Here are common things that people include on their bucket lists:

Relationships – get married, have kids, reconnect with family you've lost touch with, work on the family tree

Work / career – earn a degree, get a designation, get a promotion, work for a specific company, start a business

Money – pay off the credit cards, pay off student loans, have money set aside for a vacation every year, buy a house or a condo

Health – lose weight, participate in a sporting or athletic event, be active regularly, take up a sport (a new one or one you used to participate in)

Creativity – try new interests, take courses, travel, explore unfamiliar areas in your hometown

So start making that list, and who knows what exciting things could happen in your life!

## Planning short term: New Year's resolutions

By Karin Keefe

Are you planning to join a gym, lose weight or save money in 2011? If so, you won't be alone. According to a poll by the Marist Institute for Public Opinion in the US, 16% of people making resolutions said they wanted to lose weight, 13% wanted to spend less and save more, while 8% planned to exercise more.

If you made a resolution last year and you actually managed to fulfill your goal, you were one of the very few. Last year, according to poll respondents, only 60% of the people who made a resolution stuck with it for any length of time, and many of them gave up after only a few months. This year, if all else fails, consider turning to science to trick your brain into not giving up. Research provides some insight into how the brain works and points to some surprising ways to succeed.

Apparently, telling friends about goals is not a good thing, according to research described by Derek Sivers

in a TEDTalk. Sivers explains that when we talk about what we plan on doing, "the mind mistakes the talking for the doing." We feel so satisfied by our friends' acknowledgement of our plans that we believe we are actually taking steps toward achieving our goals.

In another study published in an upcoming issue of *Psychological Science*, University of Utah researchers Himansu Mishra and Arul Mishra showed that receiving exact feedback can kill our motivation in our pursuit of goals. It seems that we can trick our brains when feedback is vague. For example, if your goal is to reach a target weight of 130 pounds and you are told that you weigh 140 pounds, you are more likely to lose motivation than if you are told you weigh between 135 and 140 pounds. In the latter situation your brain will believe you are closer to 135 and closer to your target and, as a result, will remain motivated. So, it seems the best resolutions for 2011 might be to throw away the bathroom scale and keep your plans under your hat.





## Guilty feet have got no rhythm

Breaking down 'Black Swan', one egg at a time



Angela Espinoza

For the better part of 2010, the hype surrounding *Black Swan* had reached levels that are often unmatched by the film itself, case in point, *Tron: Legacy*. Seeing as this is a work of Darren Aronofsky though, there was a fairly low chance the film would be a disappointment. While *Black Swan* was far from disappointing, it was also something entirely different from what I was expecting.

The story revolves around a young woman named Nina Sayers (Natalie Portman), a ballerina living in New York with her mother, Erica (Barbara Hershey). A local company has announced plans for a semi-revised production of *Swan Lake*, and its director, Thomas Leroy (Vincent Cassel), after much consideration, has his eyes set on Nina to play the lead. Nina, who is as fragile emotionally as she is physically, begins to feel her part weighing down on her when Lily (Mila Kunis), a fellow dancer, proves to be something of her equal. Determined to keep the role hers, Nina's world descends into chaos.

Yet, at the same time, the movie is nothing like that. Much of *Black Swan* is multilayered in visual and symbolic themes, with mirrors and the concept of when blacks and whites become grays being played on heavily. Without spoiling too much, Lily is indeed Nina's equivalent as a dancer, but they are on opposite sides of the dance floor. Nina perfectly embodies the white swan in the tale of *Swan Lake*: graceful, gentle, and sensitive. Lily, however, is the absolute black swan: wild, seductive, and exciting. This realization does not lead to a 'revenge' type thriller, as I have a feeling some may have expected. Instead, it attempts to build up a combining of the two characters in several awesome ways.

On top of these themes comes the far less hidden need for perfection. The character of Beth (Winona Ryder), an ex-prima ballerina forced into retirement, becomes another obsession for Nina. Beth is meant to represent

where the desire for perfection can lead one, and Nina's unstable mind follows after it like a lost puppy.

*Black Swan* can best be described as a psychological thriller and body horror. The first of the two genres is easy to understand, with Nina crumbling under the pressure she places upon herself. Body horror is another genre some may not be all-to-familiar with. Indeed, even in a beautifully sophisticated looking piece such as *Black Swan*, it reaches fantastic levels of gory 'transformation' scenes reminiscent of various Cronenberg works and, more recently, *District 9*. Not only must I warn the squeamish, but also regular moviegoers for the occasional disturbing mind trick or jump scare.

When I initially saw *Black Swan*, I wasn't sure how to feel. It's indeed a bleak tale (Aronofsky previously directed *The Wrestler* and *Requiem for a Dream*), and yet there are many comedic moments. What's strange is these funny scenes are very dark; something the average internet troll might find amusing, and it's all intentional. Aronofsky is testing his audience, pushing them to the edge of just how cruel this world surrounding Nina can become, and it is both equally depressing and hilarious. Odds are you've also recently heard about Portman's Oscar buzz; I can tell you right now that not only will she be nominated, but she'll probably win. *Black Swan* is currently in theatres, and it honestly requires a second viewing if you want to catch all the subtext.



## Great Scott! They're sending you back...to the future!

Telltale Games ain't no chicken.



By Cody Klyne, Arts Editor

Growing up in the 90s, I was raised on a solid diet of sugary cereals, Saturday morning cartoons, 80's movies and, perhaps the thing I cherish most from this time in my life, adventure games. Games like *Maniac Mansion* and *Day of the Tentacle*, the *Monkey Island* series, and *Sam and Max*. Games that, while not always clearly logical, insert rubber chicken with a pulley in the middle joke here, managed to get my ADD-raddled child brain to slow down and think creatively to complete an objective.

It's 2011 and, while my personality and general attitude towards life has...evened out and slowed down some since the aforementioned heydays of my childhood, the tradition of the madcap graphic adventure game remains alive and intact thanks to developer/publisher Telltale Games. Seeing success as a result of their treatment, and revival of, the *Sam and Max* franchise back in 2006 was only the beginning. Having since gone on to release a series of episodic adventure games based on *Wallace and Gromit*, *Homestar Runner*, and *Monkey Island*, their most recent foray in the genre will, over the course of the months to come, take gamers back to the golden days of traveling through time with Marty McFly and Doc Brown. *Back to the Future* is, well, back.

At the top of their game, and realizing what's at stake, Telltale spared no expense when it came to stacking the deck in their favour. Bringing back Christopher Lloyd as the voice of the ever eccentric Doctor Emmet Brown was a pivotal step in the right direction towards making the game feel like *Back to the Future* should. But what about Marty? Unlike Chris Lloyd, who's

always just kind of been "old," Michael J. Fox is hardly the same plucky, charismatic young-man that he was back in the 1980's. Enter AJ LoCascio. Failed actor turned successful McFly sound-alike, if you didn't know it wasn't Teen Wolf era Michael J, you'd swear that it was.

Sticking to their patented monthly release formula, episode one of the planned five part series fittingly titled 'It's About Time' picks up just six months after where the third movie left off. With Doc Brown gone, and with the bank eyeing the contents of his estate to square off his debts, and seeing nothing but dollar signs, Marty's forced to cope with the idea that his time traveling friend may actually be gone...forever? Of course not! Without directly spoiling the story, which is a heck of a lot of fun and loosely captures the essence of what made the original trilogy so great, I'll leave it at saying that Doc is in trouble and it's up to you, Marty McFly, to go to his rescue.

Employing traditional point and click graphic adventure game mechanics, combining and using items with objects and NPCs in the environment, players will be forced to solve puzzles, like how to retrieve the Doc's book of notes from Biff, and overcome challenges to see Marty to the end and rescue Emmet.

As a lifelong fan of the movies, and an avid adventure gamer, I'd be hard-pressed to find any reason why anyone with even a passing interest in either shouldn't jump at the chance to experience the game for themselves. With this first chapter clocking in at three hours, and with four more chapters to go, 2011 is shaping up to be the year of the time-travelling DeLorean.

5/5





## I have become comfortably numb

The night Roger Waters took over Vancouver

By Angela Espinoza,  
Arts Reviewer

All alone or in two's, folks from all over coiled themselves around what truly was Rogers Arena on the night of December 10. As the promptly stated 8:00pm edged ever nearer, fans icing over in their anticipation began banging on the doors and windows. As if a dam had broke, people flooded into the arena from all sides; in the blink of an eye, everyone was in their seats and yet another set of everyone was buying merch.

From a speaker came a voice demanding the crowd identify which one of them was Spartacus. The screams and cheers of "I am Spartacus!" were soothed by a lone trumpet building up to an explosion of red fireworks shooting up from the stage. An overtly cheery Roger ran out, stealing the trench coat from a lone mannequin and before you could say "Yeah", had a pair of shades placed upon him. At that moment, and for the rest of the night, the 67-

year-old Roger sang just as he did thirty years ago. Marching men rose from behind, carrying giant flags of the hammers as searchlights began swarming around the room. The stage was surrounded by a flurry of further fireworks, and then, a plane suddenly fell and crashed, bursting into flames. This was all within the first five minutes.

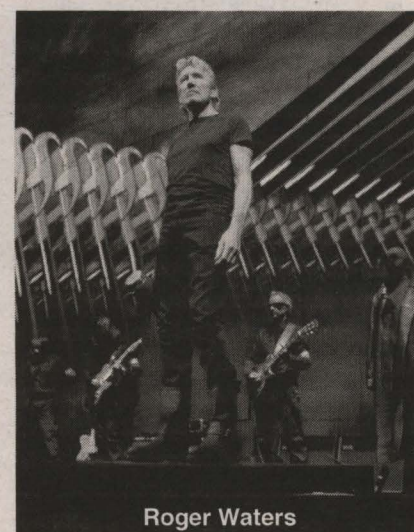
"The Thin Ice" was played along to pictures of fallen soldiers and family members from various wars, starting with Roger's father. For the unaware few, *The Wall* is partially based around the theme of war's consequences, and the live show has been styled to play more heavily upon these themes. The pictures then began to melt into a sea of blood by "Another Brick in the Wall, Part I", transposed with footage of children with empty eyes and shattered homes. Another searchlight appeared before "The Happiest Days of our Lives", and amidst the graffiti covered wall, a giant Schoolmaster appeared, staring down the audience as he pranced about menacingly, followed

eventually by children running out and screaming at him with the audience in adorably fake English accents.

As "Mother" came about, Roger opened the song by introducing his 'experiment' to have his current live self sing along with footage of "that poor, miserable, f—ked up young Roger from all those years ago". Near the middle point, a large, frightening moving statue of Mother appeared in the back — her burning red eyes and shaking head taunting the audience for the remainder of the tune. "Goodbye Blue Sky" was played with a video of planes dropping bombs in the shapes of various corporate images and religious symbols, to the audience's delight. "Empty Spaces" was paired with beautifully graphic hyper-sexualized and ultra-violent animation taken from the 1982 film.

As you can tell, the show went on like this, one spectacular performance after another. By the middle of the show, the wall separating the audience from Roger had been built, one brick at a time. This act stresses

how important the show is as a whole; we don't need to physically see Roger to know he's with us for the ride. Three weeks later, and still I've never felt such disbelief towards seeing anything. The beauty and complexity of the live show layered on top of the album is an experience burned permanently into my skull. When a DVD version of the show is eventually released, I beg all of you to see it.



Roger Waters

## I want to make video games

...and I'm going to

By Simon Staszkiwicz

It started when I was six years old, fighting with my brother for my turn to play Super Mario Brothers. A few years later my dad told us that he sometimes set the clock ahead an hour and sent us to bed early so he could play too. Fast forward to my final year in high school where my computer programming courses were my GPA boosters; it was there, after creating a fun little tank game for a final project in programming class, that I decided that a career in video game programming would be awesome.

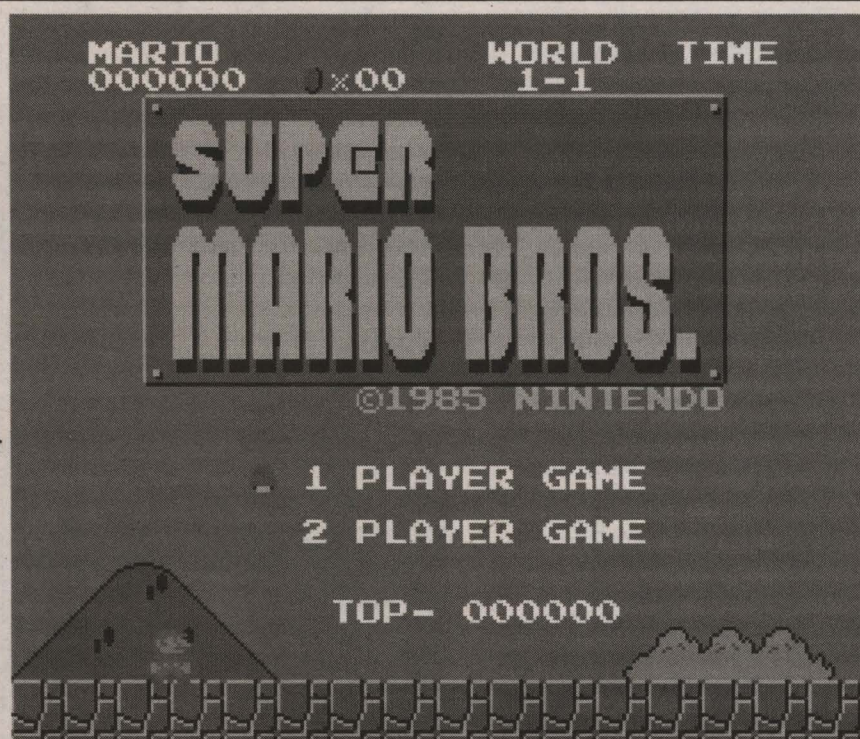
It only took me four years to realize it that I should have pursued that. I've talked to a few industry professionals since then and I've learned a few things that I thought I should share:

There are three main kinds of "game makers". There are designers, programmers, and artists. Obviously this is quite a generalization, but

it's important to realize that finding your place in the industry starts with deciding what path you want to take. Suffice it to say, there are many different kinds of jobs available in the video game industry and you should study up on what you want to do. Programming is a safe choice because if you're finding it very hard to find a job in the video game industry, you're still very employable as a programmer elsewhere.

Employers are looking for somebody who's passionate about games. That passion will separate you from the competition. Marching into an interview for a position as a junior programmer with EA or Ubisoft and telling them that your only real experience with games is your time spent with Farmville and Sudoku puzzles is probably not going to impress anybody. Let it shine through that you love games and that you're proud to be a gamer.

If you've never made a game before, you should do it. Now.



Working with a friend, or going it alone, you should take the time to start a side-project. It can be as complicated or as simple as you like. The idea is to get a sense of whether or not you enjoy actually making the game. If you find yourself still just as interested

as when you started after a few days, you can say with confidence, "I want to do this for a living." The next step is planning out your future in such a way that you can confidently say "I am going to do this for a living."



## Objectively, beautiful

Steve Martin's latest novel offers a crash-course in art, if not fiction

By Sharon Miki

What is lost when something, or someone, crosses the threshold from something to be admired to something to be coveted? What happens when one turns "objects of beauty into objects of value"?

*An Object of Beauty* (Grand Central, \$29.99) chronicles the 20-year art-world ascension of ruthless vamp Lacey Yeager, from the Sotheby's basement to high-priced uptown galleries in the dizzying New York art scene. Narrated through the meekly sardonic lens of Lacey's long-time friend and admirer, Daniel Franks, the story wryly comments on the seemingly arbitrary economic rollercoaster of the art world, with Lacey's personal career-path serving as witness.

Steve Martin, who rose to fame as a television and film entertainer, has quietly developed numerous sub-careers as a musician (he won a Grammy award in 2010 for his banjo-filled bluegrass album), screenwriter, art collector and novelist. *An Object of Beauty* is Martin's third novel, following 2000's *Shopgirl*, which was later made into a film starring Martin, and 2003's *The Pleasure of My Company*.

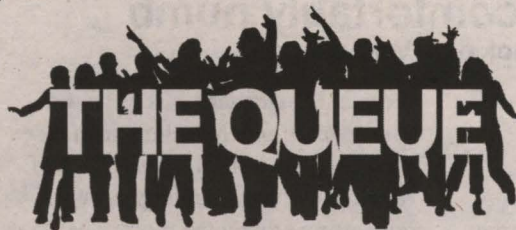
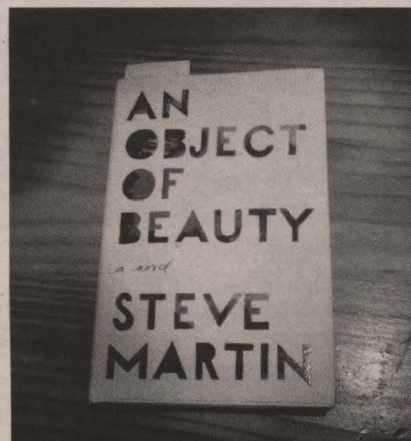
Reading *An Object of Beauty*, it is quickly clear that Martin is an astute observer of the human condition and a good writer. Through his narrator's musings on Lacey's life, Martin provides a startlingly crisp and nuanced portrait of the unique culture and personalities that frequent the various angles of the art scene. From the multi-grottoed ecosystem of assorted New York neighbourhoods, to Russia, to Boston, to California and Asia, Lacey flits across the art world in her dealings, dragging the reader along with her.

While the story is well-written and obviously well-intentioned, its main characters seem to follow the lead of the champagne one imagines is frequently enjoyed in the story's world; they sparkle and pop initially, but ultimately fall flat. Daniel's narration is largely unnecessary, functioning more as a Martin-toned

voiceover than as a substantial character. Worse, as Daniel himself admits, the character seems to devote nearly two decades of his life and risk personal ruin for the whims of a sometimes-friend. Lacey is meant to be a figure of intrigue who apparently is able to charm her way through the high-rollers, yet her cold unfeeling demeanour leaves the reader feeling unconvinced as to why she holds such mythical-like powers over those around her. Lacey is sexual, with frequent unexplained references to her penchant for "vibrating herself," and yet is seemingly incapable of any other serious emotion. In this way, Lacey is ultimately a character that the reader wants to root for, but doesn't.

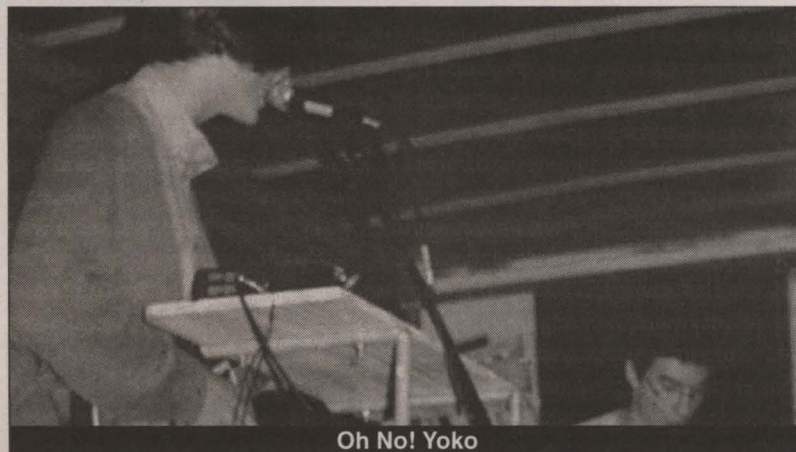
What *An Object of Beauty* lacks in character development, however, is nearly forgiven by its unique show-and-tell strategy for educating the reader on its subject-matter. Scattered throughout the novel are 22 colour reproductions of the artworks being described by the story. By using the eclectic mix of art as a device to move the plot forward, Martin manages to keep the reader engaged in the story—if only to see what piece might come next.

Overall, *An Object of Beauty* lacks the level of believable characterization to make it a great literary work. However, Martin's novel is still worth reading, if not skimming, for its crash course in derisive cultural commentary and visually-aided art history. But, then again, it's always possible that, like the masterpieces described in the novel, I might not be sophisticated enough to fully appreciate the book's value as a work of art.



## The welcome back edition

Jan 6 – 8



Oh No! Yoko

By Cody Klyne, Arts Editor

Winter break was great. Spending time with friends, family, and all the other cool people in our lives and, even though you probably indulged more than you should have, you're *totally* prepped for 2011 and can walk away from 2010 feelin' good... right? The truth is you're probably already stressing out about the new semester. The weight of last year, and the year before, and the year before, have only further compiled into what is more commonly known as "baggage." Thankfully, for most, the first week of classes is usually the most lax of the semester; so take your time! Stretch out, sit back, and ease yourself into the flow of things. Before you know it, you'll be churning out reports and writing your midterms.

Happy New Years!

### Thursday, January 6

The Arts at One weekly live music performance, running nearly every Thursday throughout the semester, has become something of a tradition at the college after 20 years. Pop by the Laura C. Muir Performing Arts Theatre for 1:00pm sharp and observe a rousing chamber music

performance featuring the works of Bach, Villa-Lobos, and more! Admission is always free, and with new performances each week, there's bound to be something for everybody.

### Friday, January 7

In the list of things that I like more than the first week back at school, and trust me, it's a big list, Friday nights spent at The Biltmore would be somewhere at the top. \$10.00 at the door gets you in for what should be a great night of music from local bands 41st & Home, Oh No! Yoko, and The Oh Wells. Brought to you by the folks at VancouverIsAwesome.com and Discorder magazine, it's the perfect kinda party-party to keep your holiday mellow going that necessary extra day, or two, or three...

### Saturday, January 8

If staying home and watching the Canucks take out the Detroit Red Wings on a Saturday night isn't your jam (7:00pm), why not head down to The Rio Theatre and catch *Tron Legacy* before it's gone? Last year's seizure inducing blockbuster is this year's... seizure inducing blockbuster. CGI Jeff Bridges compels you.



## Body Break:

### RESUSCITATE YOUR BRAIN!

By **Stephanie Trembath**,  
Life and Style Editor

**A**fter two weeks spent eating, socializing, and enjoying time off from the familiar stresses of school, it's natural for that general feeling of dread and angst to begin creeping up as we prepare for the new semester to start. Personally, I have already begun thinking about midterms and planning which days I can study and for how long, but I still think it's important to savour the few moments you get by yourself by doing something you enjoy, which for me happens to be reading. Likewise, if you spent the holidays snowboarding, travelling, partying, or rushing around shopping malls for all your perfect Christmas gifts, reading is one activity that allows a chance to relax for a few hours while still enjoying yourself. A book nerd

myself, I loitered in bookstores for an absurd amount of time over the holidays and picked these gems out as my personal favourites;

#### If you enjoy escapism:

*Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* by Margaret Atwood. Her writing may be really dry and hard to get into, but it's the perfect way to escape for a few hours and her novels usually leave you thinking about the way our society works and often are disturbing and depressing. *Oryx and Crake* is the prequel to Atwood's recent novel *The Year of the Flood*; both offer a dystopic view point of the world and the way we live. If you enjoy works by George Orwell and his novel *1984*, you will enjoy Atwood's novels.

#### If you want to laugh:

*I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell* by Tucker Max. Extremely offensive to women, often disgusting, and

unnecessarily descriptive, Tucker Max's first novel is a recount of his twenties as a partying addict and floundering lawyer. He is rude, cynical, chauvinistic, racist, and an egotistical drunk, but his novel is hilarious in an unusual way and a nice break from the norm. A word of warning; ladies, you are going to take offense to just about every second word out of this guy's mouth so if you are a little too sensitive or a radical feminist I would go back to Atwood. Keep in mind you don't have to agree with what he is writing and the fact that you will hopefully never run into this guy and you will be alright.

#### If you enjoy philosophy:

*The Doors of Perception* by Aldous Huxley. Written about his experience on the drug mescaline, Huxley's novel is delicately written, incredibly intellectual, and shares a rare knowledge of drugs and their

effects. Like much of his other works, Huxley's novel enlightens the reader through methods of escapism and philosophical questioning. If you want a light or easy read, do not choose one of Huxley's works.

#### If you have a love for literature:

*In the Skin of a Lion* and *Slaughterhouse* by Michael Ondaatje. One of my personal favourite writers based on his purely poetic language and effortless ability in describing mundane events with such precision and immaculate detail. Typically dealing with romance and conflict, both novels are written in a place between fragmented memories and a present state, so the stories unfold slowly and not in linear fashion; events are slowly transformed and details are hidden to stir the suspense.

## Christmas cheer and New Year's resolutions

Babe on a Budget

By **Stephanie Trembath**,  
Life and Style Editor

**C**hristmas this year passed me by much too fast and came way too soon; I had barely finished exams when I found myself agonizing over what to buy friends and family with what little money I saved over the course of our fall semester. My meagre diet of sushi, eggs, and yogurt is a sure-fire way to save money although my coffee addiction was fast at consuming my squandered funds. After decidedly setting up a secret Santa among my sisters (there's four of us) and splitting the cost of my parents gifts with my sisters (they must think I am so cheap), I made it through the holidays with enough money left over to pay rent.

Thankfully I received a ton of money for my birthday which is in December, and for Christmas from relatives and family members who know I recently moved out. Apparently moving out is a responsible and mature act, so everyone has the shared idea of my growing up and making better

choices and those types of adult things, which is not always the case. Instead of taking my over-generous check from my dad that I received for my birthday and putting it towards textbooks or saving it for rent, I purchased a ridiculously priced pair of jeans from Miss Sixty. They are mostly dark denim with a strip of black nylon running down the middle of the leg, and I got them on sale at 30% off, but they are not practical for use every day and will most likely be out of style within the year. However, I wore them out twice over the holidays and the amount of compliments and stares I received make them totally worth it, and I figured I just won't tell my dad what I used the money for.

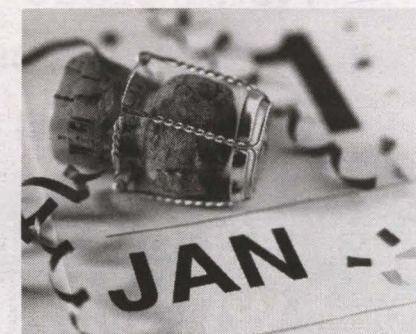
For the rest of my family, the ones who know me better and realize that I have the tendency to do what I want when I want regardless of the future consequences, I received more practical gifts that I would never on any account purchase for myself. My lovely sister, who is twenty years old and miles ahead of me in the logical department, bought me a combination of presents for

the kitchen. I now have a steamer, rice cooker, slow cooker, and three vegetarian cook books. I am extremely excited to chop, mix, and toss things into my cookers to stew all day so that my dinner pretty much prepares itself, but I am not going to lie; I am terrified and the whole idea gives me anxiety. I intend to start reading the cookbooks right away and have already invited friends over for a dinner party in the upcoming week. My backup plan; I have a couple of bottles of wine I received for Christmas so I can always get everyone drunk before I feed them. That way no one will a) care what they are eating, or b) realize what is on the plate.

My boyfriend, along with the razor blade necklace, bought me pillows, slip covers, a French press machine, and a humidifier. He's a keeper isn't he? I mean, who wouldn't want razor blades and pillows for Christmas? Again, they are things I desperately needed, especially the French press to make coffee so I can quit spending \$5.65 a day on lattes. My New Years resolution was to cut Starbucks, but

that resolution lasted exactly twelve hours. I woke up Saturday morning and where did I immediately go? Yes, I headed to Starbucks, but in my defence I was not at my place to use my brand new coffee maker so that one morning was my freebie (I anticipate lots of freebies in the upcoming future, especially during the first week back to school).

Alas, 2011 is a brand new year and I intend to use all my practical gifts to their full extent and ease up on the frivolous purchases (especially since I exhausted the majority of my funds on my Miss Sixty jeans, a white shirt that makes me look like a flying squirrel when I stretch my arms out, and a belt that I've wanted and got sick of waiting for it to go on sale).





## New Years nonsense: Jagged jewels and stylish scales

Pack all whimsical ruffles and romantic lace into storage to start off 2011

By **Stephanie Trembath**,  
Life and Style Editor

Just when you think you have seen everything and are tired of watching a re-run of vintage trends on the runway (think harem pants and bomber jackets circa 1980) a designer will come up with something rare and trendy to sweep across the fashion scene and inspire a whole new look. While classic pearls and pastel colors will never grow old, women celebrated this holiday season in an assortment of dazzling jewels that serve as multifunctional weapons as well as eye-catching accessories.

Club Monaco's inspirational

designer Meredith Kahn developed her own edgy line of jewellery called *Made Her Think*. Her accessories combine spikes with rhinestones, chunky pendants with chains, and rings that come with heavy fringes around square shaped stones or look like long talons. On the plus side, if you find yourself being followed home one night all that it would take is for you to flash your talon ring and perhaps your stalker will back off, although you also run the risk of impaling your date at the end of the night.

Along with the eagle talon rings, Club Monaco displayed a wide array of metallic and gold varnish cuffs this

holiday season decked out in tiny fish scales, which leads me to believe that a fish theme in the fashion industry is about the be big as New York designer Lauren Wolf showed off her latest diamond studded fish bone bracelet.

Another funky trendsetter this season featured Jennifer Behr, whose headbands stood out with large spikes or silver studs on thick black bands. If you ever want to spend a night warding off all men, rather than dancing at Vancouver's newest gay club 560, simply purchase a head-wrap decked out with one inch spikes from ear to ear. I promise, no men will hit on you with a metallic weapon wrapped

around your pretty little head.

As I enjoy finding new obscure things to wear, and secretly adore the idea of wearing jewels that look like something out of *Star Trek*, I loved this idea of blending weaponry with fashion wear. Christmas morning I happily opened a jewellery box I got from my boyfriend and to my entire family's dismay, I pulled out a long necklace made entirely out of razor-blades instead of the traditional blue box from Tiffany's. Personally, I would much rather ring in the new year wearing jagged jewels and scales than something everyone else is wearing, but that's just me.

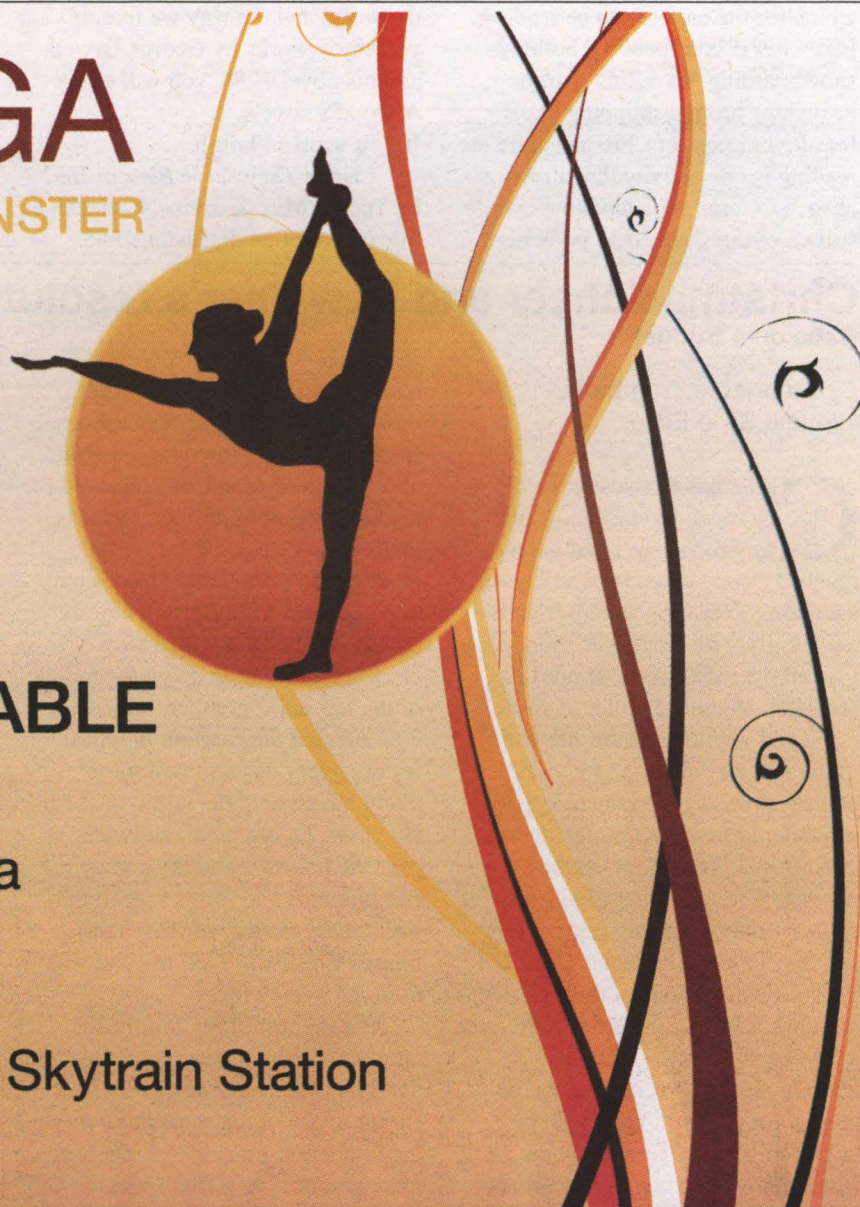
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## Inside the credit bureaus

By Jeffery Bishku-Aykul — McGill Daily (McGill University)

MONTREAL (CUP) — “I never dreamt that they were going to take my Visa away from me. That was a shock. I thought, ‘This year I’ll be good and I’ll fix it.’ But they took my credit away from me.”

Concordia University student Brandi Goulding, 20, first began struggling with debt after moving to Montreal. This month her Visa card expired with a \$500 debt and no option for renewal. For Goulding, repaying this debt, as well as several student loans and a maxed-out \$3,600 Future Shop credit card has been a major challenge.

Her relationship with credit began shortly after her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, when she applied for her first Visa card.

“One of my best friends since growing up, her birthday is two weeks before mine. She got a Visa on her

birthday. It was so easy. She walked in, she said she wanted one and a week later she had one. And so I decided, ‘Hey, if she can do that, I can do that too,’” said Goulding.

“It was a novelty. It was something I couldn’t do before and I wanted to do then. I wanted a Visa,” she added.

Goulding received her Visa after a short meeting with a TD representative; she filled out a form and was asked several brief questions regarding her employment status and income. Yet there was no discussion of credit ratings. Since then, Goulding has never requested a credit report.

“Having a credit rating has not affected me yet; I haven’t hit that road yet. I’m really worried for when it does. The second I try to get a bank loan or certain jobs they are going to check my credit rating.”

Goulding is not alone.

As consumers, everyone is affected by their credit rating, a statistic that determines what we can buy, which phone plans are available to us, which credit lines we can open and which maximums we may obtain on our credit cards. Credit bureaus have existed for more than a century. However, as the market for credit cards grows and companies obtain an ever-increasing amount of information about their customers, new concerns are being raised about consumer privacy and the effect that these ratings have on borrowers.

Furthermore, these companies are part and parcel of North America’s credit economy, which critics blame for a host of problems, including the current economic downturn.

TransUnion and Equifax are by no means household names. But these two companies are Canada’s largest credit bureaus. Both companies are

multinational and publicly traded on Wall Street.

The calculation of credit ratings is a big business. In 2001, Equifax had operating revenue of just over \$1 billion USD; by 2009, it had increased to over \$1.8 billion.

Tom Reid, TransUnion Canada’s director of consumer solutions, explains in a conference call that his company offers a way for lenders to understand the risk that various customers represent.

“The credit granting community doesn’t care what your score is, per se. Your score is just a label that tells them what the amount of risk you represent is,” he said.

The most important type of credit rating for consumers is the Beacon Score, which is graded on a scale of 300 to 900 and represents your likelihood of repaying debts to creditors.

—Continue Pg.12

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According to TransUnion's statistics, nearly two-thirds of Canadians have what the industry considers a "fair" to "very good" rating, ranging between 700 and 900.

Companies like TransUnion additionally provide a wide variety of scores to calculate your financial habits; how likely you are to respond to a promotional offer, for instance.

"Each organization uses fairly complex empirical data and algorithms to determine the relationship between the characteristics of a borrower and the likelihood of a specific outcome," said Reid.

Research in this area has been accelerating ever since 2002 when Canadian Tire, which operates its own line of credit cards, began analyzing the relationship between customers' shopping habits and delinquency. The most reliable credit users were found to have a penchant for premium birdseed. Unreliable borrowers, on the other hand, were more likely to buy chrome skull car accessories, and to frequent a pool bar on Concordia's campus called Sharx.

Following studies like Canadian Tire's, these kinds of purchases can also influence your ability to access credit.

"When a consumer makes a request for credit, that organization wants to look at what the likelihood is that the individual is going to become a 90 days or worse delinquent," said Reid. "The organizations want to know what the likelihood of delinquency is because that leads to write-offs, and that is a cost to that organization. So they are using tools from TransUnion to try and better identify who the optimal customer is for that organization from the perspective of risk."

He explains that any time you apply for credit or enter a contractual relationship with an institution you allow your personal information, including information such as social insurance numbers, birthdays and addresses, to be accessed by credit bureaus. Thus, a credit rating may reflect a large portion of your monetary history, including but not limited to: The payment of utility bills, phone bills, medical fees, rent, car payments, mortgages and credit card interest.

"The credit reporting agencies collect data from all of the credit granters throughout Canada. So we have a very broad perspective on how any given individual is performing with all of their credit obligations. We also understand the characteristics that relate to each of those individuals," said Reid. He adds that the Beacon Score is designed specifically to predict the probability of delinquency. "What we try to do is identify specific characteristics related

to an outcome, in this particular case [whether] that someone is going to miss three consecutive payments."

In late October, Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney warned Canadians of the country's rising debt-to-income ratio. In 2003, for the first time, Canadians accumulated a collective debt greater than their income. The debt-to-income ratio, which has hit an all time high, now indicates that for each dollar the average Canadian earns, he or she owes \$1.47.

Sam Gindin is a professor of political science at York University and the co-author of the recent *In and Out of Crisis*, a critique of neoliberal economic policy and its role in the current economic downturn.

Gindin argues that as worker benefits began to decrease in the 1980s, more labourers began to work longer hours. In the late 1990s, this increase in work time began to level off and consumers started turning to credit for their purchases.

"In the '60s, when people were relatively secure, they were pretty confident and they were raising their wage demands," he said. "And out of that came a counter-attack. That counter-attack was to discipline workers. It was to let unemployment rise, clamp down on wages and speed up production. So one of the things that happens is workers were defeated and they're trying to maintain their standard of living."

As consumer dependence on credit increases, so does the dependence of lenders on credit scores. But this statistic does not always provide a reliable reflection of a person's or a company's financial standing.

Brenda Shanahan is a former banker now writing her PhD at McGill University on credit card companies. She also teaches financial literacy to Canadian soldiers. She explains that because lenders rely heavily on credit scores to recognize low and high-risk borrowers, consumers with good credit scores seeking loans are sometimes permitted to accumulate debts they cannot afford to repay.

"Your credit score may be good," said Shanahan, "but just because you get the loan doesn't necessarily mean you have the cash flow to pay it back. Now, with easy access to credit you have people who are able to obtain credit cards from various sources and max them all out."

Credit rating agencies also analyze the financial health of major corporations. Because these companies are accountable to shareholders and seek high ratings, their credit bureau may experience conflicts of interest in which issuing a low rating might harm their business, whereas issuing a high rating may attract customers.

This phenomenon gained

international attention following the subprime mortgage crisis of 2008, when millions of houses in the U.S. were foreclosed on as a result of mortgage delinquency. Bonds relying upon these payments that had formerly been top rated were sent spiralling in value.

Last month, the Financial Stability Board, an international organization established at the 2009 G20 Summit in London, U.K. as a response to the credit crisis, publicly advocated a decrease in the dependence of the financial community on credit rating agencies.

"[Credit bureaus] play this very important role in assessing risk," said Gindin. "Now, the trouble with it is that they're not independent from the companies they are rating. If you're getting paid for these ratings, you want to be careful if you come down too tough on [a company]. So there's this problem in the system: Rating companies themselves are compromised."

And credit ratings have fuelled the popularity of credit.

According to Shanahan, credit scores have allowed bankers to analyze the risk that customers represent at speed never before possible. As a result, banks have come to realize that the mass marketing of credit represents a greater profit than one-on-one decision making.

"Now, if your Beacon Score is good you get the loan," she said. "If you are declined, end of story. The employer is not interested in employees spending two hours with one client when you can approve ten Visa cards in ten minutes."

This ability to calculate risk based upon the information that credit scores represent has led these same banks and credit card companies to make offers to students and young consumers that would not have existed even 20 years ago.

Shanahan recalls that in the past, companies would typically target students studying professions such as medicine, law and business. However, in recent years this market has expanded to all students.

"The young adult in today's society is still going through some very important developmental stages, and they're not yet earning anything. Chances are you're not going to have your first full-time job until [later]. But you will have had access to credit since age 18. So you're being led down a path where credit becomes like cash," she said.

"Somebody figured out that not only most students would pay their credit cards, but that they wanted to buy their loyalty at the beginning of their careers, because the company that you tend to start dealing with, you tend to stick with. And so they even factored that in; even if they lost some money with students, the

long-term market share that they would gain would pay off in the end."

Banks spend millions every year marketing credit cards to young Canadians, particularly university students. In 2005, the average Canadian university graduate left school with \$18,000 of debt. Credit cards only exacerbate the problem.

Robert Manning, a professor of finance at the Rochester Institute of Technology and author of *Credit Card Nation*, says companies frequently forge lucrative deals with universities so that they may solicit credit cards on campus grounds.

"[Universities] should have been using a substantial portion of that money to promote financial education," said Manning. "In the absence of that, what you have is the banks are basically training young people to learn the rules of the game that they want them to learn rather than to actually learn how to use credit and debt to their best advantage."

Shanahan also worries that student debt will have major repercussions for the adult lives of youth today.

"If a young person is leaving as a graduate with \$25,000 dollars in debt, this would serve to delay really all their adult development and plans," she said. "Economically that means it delays home purchases. It delays starting a family. If you lose your employment, then you are at risk for bankruptcy. This is what the generation coming up is facing: The chances of having periods of no employment are greater than ever."

Goulding has witnessed this phenomenon take place at Concordia. According to her, the frequency with which banks solicit credit cards on campus has increased over the past year.

"In Concordia's library, every day there is a BMO bank set up [offering credit cards]. And it's right in front of the stairs to go up into the library. So if you are choosing to study in Concordia's library, you have to say no or listen to their spiel every time you walk by."

Two years into school, Goulding has now accumulated \$20,000 of debt, a fifth of which she owes to Future Shop and Visa. She says that she wishes that there had been a greater effort on the part of the banks to inform young consumers about credit.

"I think people need to be more aware as to what they're getting themselves into. The banks need to inform people, just try to pay off what you can. I find banks to be very intimidating. When you're young and you're trying to figure things out that intimidation is a lot."



## Insufficient (fun)ds: Granville Island brewery tour

Brewing up a unique experience

By Jacey Gibb

If you're a student, chances are you miss the joys of having that wonderful thing called disposable income. Vancouver is one of the most expensive cities in the world and when you're wadding through a sea of research papers and midterms, keeping a part-time job isn't always a priority. Don't you worry though because The Other Press has the answer for students who want to enjoy life but can't afford to. Every week a spotlight will be given to an activity that's big on fun but not on price.

As a beer enthusiast, when I discovered there was a brewing company that went by GIB (one letter away from being my last name), I knew we'd get along swimmingly. Upon further investigation, I discovered the acronym stood for Granville Island Brewing found on, you guessed it, Granville Island. Active since 1984 and boasting the label of being Canada's first microbrewery, I find the GIB label comes with an unspoken promise of good beer within. As a result of my admiration, I recently make a trip to Granville Island to partake in one of their daily brewery tours.

Well that's a lie. The first day we went to book our tour, they had all filled up for the day. We decided to try again the next day and made sure to sign up a couple hours early. We arrived back at the brewery in time to be seated at a long table with several others. We were then informed that the sample cups in front of us, while empty now, would later be filled with different beers for us to try out. After a few minutes of waiting, our guide joined us and led us through the dividing glass doors, into the world of micro-brewing.

I'll start off by saying this isn't an activity meant for everyone. Our guide was friendly and very knowledgeable, making sure to ask and answer questions to involve everyone throughout the tour, yet to someone who's not into beer, the whole ordeal wouldn't have much appeal. At the

time of the tour the brewery was crowded with last-minute holiday shipments, limiting which parts of the floor we got to experience, but our guide made sure we understood what each of the machines surrounding us were. I was bombarded with beer-making trivia that made me feel like an amateur while I admired the complex machines responsible for the different stages of creation. The walkthrough of the brewery and the explanation of the processes involved took about half an hour.

When the tour reached its end, we were directed back to the meeting table and the tastings began. The first sample came in the form of the Island Lager, probably their most basic and popular beer. The quality was a nice chance of pace, since I'm used to the cheapest possible beer I can find in stores. The next sample was up to the group to decide on and I immediately started influencing my fellow beer-drinkers that the Kitsilano Maple Cream Ale sounded like the way to go. It turned out to be the right choice and then our guide introduced us to our final sample: the limited release Chocolate Stout. It's a respectable beer, with blatant traces of chocolate, but not something you see yourself having more than a couple of. We discussed our favourites, offering feedback and criticisms before our guide thanked us and bid farewell. Our group shared some friendly conversation while we polished off the last of our samples before making our way to the gift shop where we were entitled to fifteen percent off any item.

The guide was knowledgeable, the company friendly and the beer, delicious. It would probably help if you're a fan of beer, but it was an interesting tour nonetheless. Just don't get unrealistic expectations that members of the group will start getting picked off by shrinking rays and falling into beer rivers, leaving you the sole survivor in the end to inherit the brewery. You might be disappointed.

**Damage:** \$9.75/person

## What's the deal with resolutions?

By Matthew Visser

Now I am not one to go and bash someone who has a goal in mind which they want to reach, but why wait and say that that goal will start on New Years? In fact I commend people who strive to achieve something, let it be losing ten pounds or running a marathon or learning a second language. I myself have goals I want to achieve and work towards to grow as a human being and try do things I have never done before. One goal of mine is to finish writing a book I started a while back and am very close to being done. I guess the first day of the year makes sense because it is a solid date, the beginning of the New Year but why is it that when the person realized that they want to change that one thing about themselves or work towards something, they don't start doing it that day and that moment? This is what confuses me.

The big reason why I think people love to use the word resolution is because it gives them a feeling of hope for themselves and for other people using it. This year my New Year's Resolution is... see, it just sounds so promising; promising because people want to hear that they are going to succeed at something that they want to have in their life. People want to have that feeling of accomplishment in their lives, and why not? Even I myself want this, who doesn't, have that feeling and knowing that the hard work and determination they put in was not just a couple of floozy words; words, which mean nothing in the world of too many people who give up and blame other things in their lives for their failure. Now I might be sounding a bit harsh, but I am not sorry. I just feel that people give up too easily and then look at other parts of their lives to blame instead of looking at themselves for why they in the first place decided to make the resolution and why they gave up on it. Because let's face it, most resolutions get forgotten or lost as easily as the Christmas gift the out of place uncle got you thinking you need that one very unimportant thing,



but really you didn't.

The act of making resolutions is something that everyone thinks of and wants to try to do but doesn't because they think they will just stop doing it half way through, or will succeed and then have nothing to strive to after. How messed up is this? If people just sucked up the hard parts that come with resolutions and achieving goals then people would be willing to try new and exciting things in their lives, instead of having the lazy attitude which most people have.

A few years back I did a resolution ceremony where I wrote down something I wanted to forget or move past or learn from and have be gone in my life on a piece of paper and with a group of friends. We burned the pieces of paper signifying that we no longer wanted that thing in our lives. This is one other way of doing a resolution without all the hard work which comes with them.

So whether or not you believe in resolutions or feel that they are pointless, just keep in mind that another year has gone by and the days and years only go by faster as we get older. And there are so many things to do and see and learn in the world that makes life pretty amazing. I say try and do and see as many things as you can in what time you want to spend in your life and make that time a memory to think back to next New Years.





## The giving of gag gifts

Who gets the last laugh?

By Jacey Gibb, Opinions Editor

Ah, the holidays, a time of the year brimming with Secret Santa's, Chinese gift exchanges, white elephants and every other variation of the same concept. In an attempt to avoid being the person who simply wraps up a gift card or a crisp twenty dollar bill, you might feel the need to get creative with your present. It is usually in this quest to be unique and witty that you fall prey to the lure of tacky, cheesy presents that serve no real purpose other than to receive a chuckle from the recipient as they unwrap it. I of course am talking about gag gifts.

Snuggles. Chia pets. Although wrapping one of these items and placing it under the tree may seem harmless, you're really encouraging future creation of these unnecessary abominations. As a result of fuel being added to the As Seen on TV fire, a new all-time low has been reached. Just in time for the holiday

season, Snuggles for dogs are now available.

It seems everyone has a solidified opinion on clothing for animals: either you're dressing up your pet every chance you get or you loathe the very idea of it. Yet it has been decided there is an untapped market of owners out there that wish for their dogs to keep warm while keeping their hands, or paws, free.

To give you a visual, the box proudly displays dogs in situations where wearing a Snuggie would be ideal and even logical. One picture has a pair of dogs engaged in a fierce game of backgammon while another has a dog with a television remote in paw. You'll notice that while they're kept nice and warm under a fleece blanket, their paws are free to accomplish day to day tasks dogs normally do, such as browsing the Food network.

I couldn't find any information on the number of dog Snuggles sold so far, but personal curiosity

drove me to ask several store employees on how popular the item had been. Though it wasn't a smash hit, apparently sales had been decent. I wish I could say this news was surprising, but unfortunately it wasn't.

To me, Snuggles for dogs represent everything wrong with our society. Not only is the concept of Snuggles ridiculous (it's a backwards house coat, but without pockets), but the idea that your best friend needs a backwards housecoat as well just makes my brain ache. I'm not sure who I hold responsible for the dog Snuggie: the people who invented it in the first place or the people who have been grabbing it off the shelves, choosing to spend money not on something useful but on an item that will be worth a couple laughs before the recipient begins to wonder what the hell they're supposed to



do with it. I guess you could say the Snuggie for dogs is a gift that keeps on giving, in the sense that this will be something that will probably be regifted countless times over the years until it finds its way into the hands of someone who appreciates it for what it really is and simply throws it away.

By the way, I bought a dog Snuggie for my roommate for Christmas. We don't even have a dog. *Snuggles for Dogs are on sale now for \$14.95 wherever dumb stuff is sold.*

## Shopping for serial murder?

Not accepting the glamorization of violence against women

By Sharon Miki

So I'm doing a bit of last-minute shopping in the mall when I come across a most disturbing scene: female thighs, knees, calves and feet dismembered and hanging limply from the sides of packing boxes. Based on the hints of frothy taffeta and crystal-flecked pumps peeking from the cardboard tombs, the now-mutilated women were dressed for some kind of holiday office party gone horribly awry. I look around for others to share in my shock, but the passersby keep plodding along, barely taking notice. Pointing the scene out to my companion, the response is alarmingly blasé, "Geez, relax. It's just a store display. It's kind of nice, like women are pretty gifts to be shipped to you and opened."

The thing is, I am not a present waiting to be swathed in bubble wrap, shoved into a box of Styrofoam packing chips and sent to someone to be sliced open. As such, I find it unsettling that a brand would choose

to display their garments in this way. While I'm sure the marketing and merchandising staff at this particular store were going for something "cute" and "different," the lifeless, dissected and distinctly female body parts shoved in nondescript disposal bins could quite clearly double as an advertisement for serial murder.

The fact that people are willing to accept this type of marketing without a second glance is symptomatic of the underlying acceptance and glamorization of violence against women that is prevalent in our society. For example, *Two and a Half Men* continues to be one of the most popular shows on television, despite its star Charlie Sheen being a long-alleged abuser of women. In 1990, Sheen "accidentally" shot his girlfriend in the arm while his marriage to Denise Richards ended amidst allegations of threats of violence. Last Christmas, Sheen was arrested on charges of domestic violence against his third wife Brooke Mueller. However, despite this long list of reported violence against

multiple women, Sheen continues to be rewarded with a successful television career based on the support of millions of average people who tune in every week.

According to the We Can campaign to end violence against women, 51 percent of Canadian women have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. Women are being stalked, raped, beaten, abused and murdered on a regular basis in this country, yet few of us seem to be bothered by the cute display of sparkly commercial mutilation popping up in our storefronts. When we accept or, even worse, praise this type of casual message that it is ok to see women, even plastic mannequin women, depicted in this way, we are allowing ourselves to become desensitized to something that should disturb us.

Sure, advertisers and merchandisers are faced with the constant challenge of being innovative in order to grab our consumptive gaze, but they do not need to resort to these misogynistic

techniques. Let the plastic women stand up and pose. Write a catchy slogan. Whatever. All that I know is that my wallet and I will not enter a store with dead women, synthetic or otherwise, on display in the window.





# An easy solution to New Years resolutions

Resolving to put an end to resolutions

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By Jacey Gibb, Opinions Editor

It's January again and you know what that means. It's a new year, full of new opportunities, new changes, new romances, a new body, new careers; everything's going to be new and different. All you need to be able to achieve everything you've ever wanted in life is a New Years resolution. Yes, the answer's been there in front of you all along. You might have been trying to do these things for quite some time now but without making it your New Years resolution, you were destined to fail.

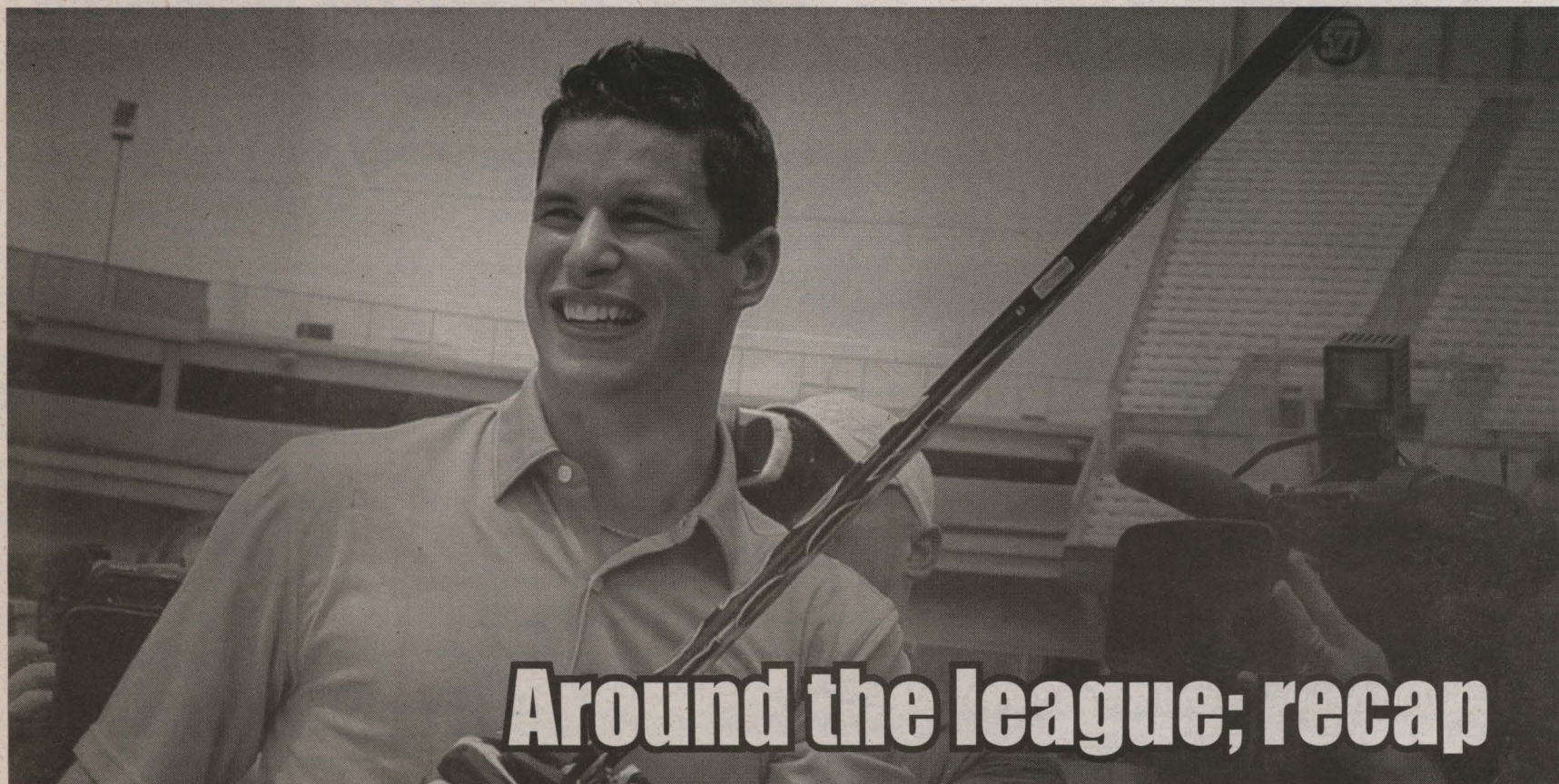
I feel like I'm trying to sell you a miracle product for only three easy payments of \$19.95, but really I'm just explaining the reasoning behind making New Years resolutions. As soon as the clock strikes midnight, you're plunged into an uphill struggle, whether it's "battling the bulge" or "quitting smoking for real this time". New Years resolutions are great because it gives us an excuse to do something we've actually wanted to do the entire time, but just didn't. Make sense? I didn't think so.

I'm worried I might be coming off as a lot more pessimistic than I mean to be. Don't get me wrong, I still make resolutions every year. The thing

is, I usually make mine something that's easily attainable like "give up windsurfing" or "inhale less toxic fumes". The idea behind New Years resolutions, that expressing interest in a goal will give you the motivation to achieve it, is great; it's the execution of the idea that's terrible. Though I have no published evidence to support me on this one and am speaking only from life experiences, I can tell you that simply making a resolution doesn't make a difference. Long-term dedication is the key to success, so deciding this week that you're "going to be more honest to people" doesn't mean you'll feel the same way in a month's time.

That's why I propose that New Years resolutions make like Alicia Silverstone's acing career and disappear. No more vowing to do more/less/equal amounts of something in the New Year. Don't even crack jokes about how you're making a resolution to not make resolutions (Oh look, it's not even midnight and you broke that one. Whoops.) If you want something done in life, might I recommend taking initiative and making it happen rather than relying heavily on wishful thinking? That's just my solution for how to deal with New Years resolutions.





## Around the league; recap

By Josh Martin, Sports Editor

Here's a look around the NHL to get you up to date with what has been the latest news over the Christmas holidays and month of December and to most importantly get you ready for the upcoming New Year.

Darryl Sutter stepped down as general manager of the Calgary Flames last week after serving eight years to the date under the organization. The always-grumpy-looking fellow is well known for coaching the Flames to the Stanley Cup finals in the 2004 season but unfortunately ended up coming up short against the Tampa Bay Lightning in game seven. Ever since that post-season run to the finals, Flames fans haven't really had much to cheer about...especially after losing defensemen juggernaut Dion Phaneuf to the Toronto Maple Leafs and Sutter re-acquiring Olli Jokinen again this year after trading him away last season because he was living up to the "bust" reputation. It has been reported that team president Ken King had asked Sutter to voluntarily step down as GM. So in the meantime assistant GM Jay Feaster is the acting GM until further notice and Darryl's younger brother Brent (who looks even grumpier than Darryl) remains as Calgary's head coach.

Sidney Crosby has been the main

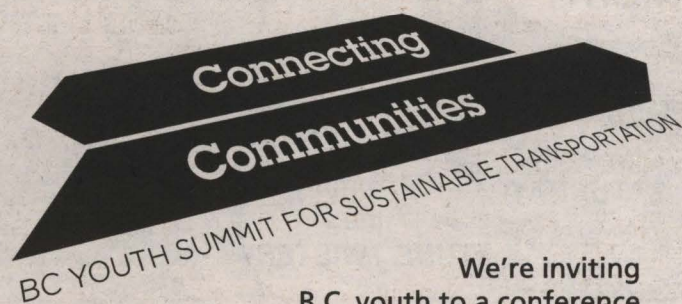
topic of discussion around the league with his stellar play of late, creating a lot of buzz with his recent 25 game point streak which came to an end last week where he accumulated a whopping 26 goals and 24 assists for 50 points during his uninterrupted run. He leads the NHL in scoring by a wide margin with 32 goals and 33 assists for 65 points, ahead of Steven Stamkos who is currently second in the scoring race with 52 points. Crosby was five games short of overcoming Mats Sundin's point streak record of 30 games which he set in the 1992-93 season with the Quebec Nordiques. Crosby's Penguins are playing strong in the Eastern Conference, topping off the number one position in the NHL with 52 points in 38 games.

If you haven't already checked out the new 24/7 Penguins/Capitals: Road to the NHL Winter Classic HBO series I highly recommend you do. The behind the scenes view of both teams is something every fan wants to be a part of and that can finally happen in this four part miniseries. This particular series shows an insider dish of what it's like on and off the ice as a coach and a player in the National Hockey League. The contrast of morale between a hot and confident Pittsburgh Penguins team where nothing seems to stand in their way and a struggling Washington Capitals squad where they can't find a

way to win is a great addition to see what it's like on both ends of the spectrum of a hot and cold team.

The great thing about this series is the fact that they show everything that is going on and they don't hold anything back. In one segment of the first episode Capitals head coach Bruce Boudreau addresses his team's mistakes during an

intermission. As the Capitals players sit with disappointment in their dressing room Boudreau lets them have it, throwing down the "f bomb" every second word. This HBO series will instantaneously bring a broader audience to the game of hockey and particularly in the U.S. where hockey isn't exactly the primary sport to watch.



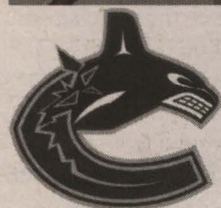
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## Canucks corner

Hottest Team in the League? Yup.

By Josh Martin, Sports Editor

**T**he Vancouver Canucks are lighting up the lamp in the Western Conference. Nothing can faze this team. They have 13 wins in their last 16 games and 11 wins out of the 14 contests they had in the month of December. It seems like everything is just clicking for the hottest team in the NHL right now.

Ryan Kesler has been carrying the team on a nightly basis of late, even if he doesn't dawn the "C" on his jersey it feels like he's the leader of this team. He was on an eight game point streak before the 4-1 win against Dallas on New Year's Eve,

scoring 14 points in that time frame. Kesler's faceoff percentage is among the best in the league, at 58.4% he's the seventh best guy when it comes down to the big draw. He's the man.

The great thing about the Canucks right now is that each line is finding ways to score. You got the Sedin line which is expected to produce and does so on a regular basis, Kesler's line which is on fire with the addition of Jeff Tambellini (and will be even stronger when Mason Raymond returns from his injury) the Malhotra-Torres line, and even the fourth line which is chipping in here and there. It's a full cast show that comes out to perform on a game-to-game basis.

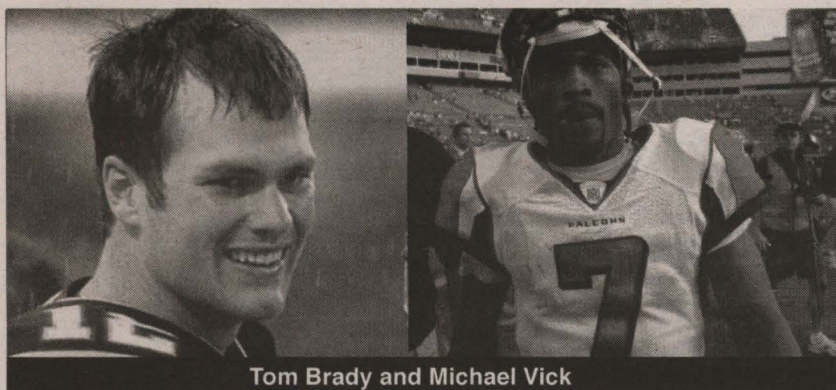
And this Tambellini guy...who is he? Where did he come from? He's absolutely ripping it up for the Canucks after they decided to call him up to fill in for an injury. And he's been filling in that's for sure, with nine goals and 15 points in 22 games. His shot on the right side, top right corner is lethal and his speed fits right in nicely with Kesler's style of play. The former first round, 27<sup>th</sup> overall draft pick by the Los Angeles Kings in the 2003 draft has possibly been the best surprise to the Canucks line-up this year. GM Mike Gillis is looking like an evil genius for nabbing the winger in the off season last summer as a free agent.

Cory "Schneids" Schneider

has been solid between the pipes with yet another win on New Year's Eve to increase his record to 6-0-2. With his .923 SV% and 2.38 GAA he's boosting confidence into the team as a solid back-up goaltender while also providing some options for Coach 'V' if he needs to lean on Schneider to relieve Luongo's heavy workload. With all of the hype which was speculated around the Canucks at the beginning of the season about being a top contender for the Stanley Cup, it's safe to say that they have finally lived up to that recognition. Now all they have to do is go out and win the Cup...easier said than done.



## NFL MVP debate



Tom Brady and Michael Vick

By David Hollinshead

It has become obvious that the race for the Most Valuable Player this season in the NFL has come down to a more contained two-man race between Tom Brady and Michael Vick. Brady, winner of three Super Bowls, twice previously being the MVP, and a third helping receiver Deion Branch win it, one time league MVP, being the first quarterback to lead his team to a 16-0 record, setting the record for most touchdown passes in a year with 50, and more recently, setting the record for most consecutive passes without an interception with 319, against Michael Vick.

Vick, who has started a new chapter in his life after being in prison for two years for dog fighting, has returned to the exciting player he was for the Atlanta Falcons, and has led the Philadelphia Eagles to a division title. Brady this season has thrown a 66% completion percentage for 3,701 yards and 34 touchdowns, and only four interceptions with a 109.8 passer rating by week 16, with one game left against Miami, where it's debatable how much he will play, making this one of his best statistical seasons of his career. In addition to putting up excellent numbers, Brady had led his team to a 13-2 record, winning the AFC East division, clinching home-field advantage in the playoffs, having one of the most difficult schedules in the league, and helping revitalize WR Branch's career.

The Patriots traded for Branch after the falling out of WR Randy Moss, who they dealt to the Minnesota Vikings a week before. Branch, after leaving the Patriots to play for the Seattle Seahawks, had a statistical downward spiral and fell

off most defence's radar, came back to being one of Brady's favourite targets, and the QB helped him to his best season in years, almost reaching 1,000 yards for the first time in his career, which he might have reached if the Patriots traded for Branch sooner.

Brady also has re-elevated his team to elite status, making them as dominant as they were in their three Super Bowl championship days. In a press conference where he was asked about potentially winning the MVP, Brady said, "The only award I ever cared about is a Super Bowl ring."

Michael Vick is having a rebound season. The Philadelphia Eagles signed him once he was released from prison to be a role player in their Wildcat formations, giving him a second chance in the NFL, and in life. After the Eagles traded stalwart quarterback Donovan McNabb to the Washington Redskins, they gave the starting job to Kevin Kolb, who most of Philadelphia thought was going to inherit the job when they drafted him in 2005, but was replaced by Vick after injuries and ineffectiveness. Since then, Vick has thrown for 3,018 yards, 21 touchdowns, and only six interceptions, with a quarterback rating of 100.2, also providing a dual-threat with his mobility.

The Eagles have a respectable record of 10-5, and clinched the NFC East division. Vick though, may be at a disadvantage in this MVP race. He hasn't played the entire season, Philadelphia has a less dominant record, and in the 24-14 loss to Minnesota, Vick was held ineffective for most of the game, despite having decent stats, the offence just didn't get it done. Whoever wins it though, both quarterbacks would rather have a Super Bowl ring.

## An NHL Winter Classic



By Josh Martin, Sports Editor

What can get any better than a match-up between rival teams, the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Washington Capitals in a winter classic out in the cold in front of 68,111 cheering fans? Pretty much nothing. The NHL Bridgestone Winter Classic was in full flight on Saturday night at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh after heavy rainfall postponed the game time to commence at 5pm instead of 1pm.

The game was regarded as one of the most anticipated contests of the 2010-11 season, with the likes of superstars Sidney Crosby and Alexander Ovechkin donning the classic jerseys and squaring it off on the ice in just the fourth annual winter classic game in NHL history. However, despite the hype, both superstars didn't have a large presence on the ice and were held off the score sheet.

Pittsburgh's Evgeni Malkin opened the scoring in the second period on a partial break to make it 1-0 with a shot that went between goaltender Fluery's legs. Shortly after, Mike Knuble then tied it up on a scramble play on the man advantage for Washington. Capitals winger Eric Fehr put in a couple of goals himself, including a beautiful give-and-go play in the third period which he snapped home glove side to make it 3-1 which

ended up being the final score in favour of Washington.

Throughout the game there was heavy rainfall periodically every so often that would drench the entire stadium. The ice shimmered, the wind picked up and the fans cheered even louder...a classic to say the least. The Penguins record of 25-12-3 is good for first in the Eastern Conference and 53 points. However, it's pretty tight in the East and even though the Pens are on top in that conference there are several teams that are right on their tail.

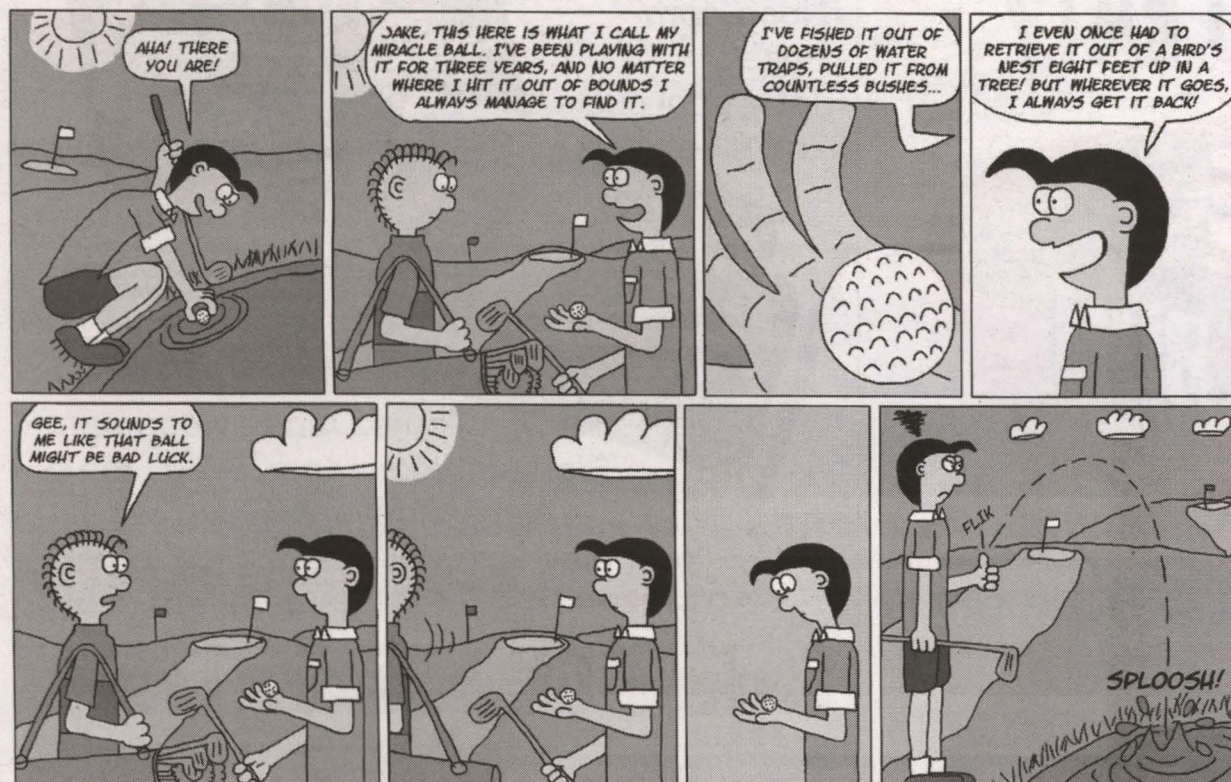
The Capitals are currently on a three game winning streak and in the midst of turning things around from their previous struggles earlier in the month of December. They are only two points behind the first placed Penguins and sit at fifth place in the East with a 23-12-5 record. It seems that finally perhaps the Caps are out of their funk.

Ovechkin on the other hand hasn't had the most productive season thus far with just 42 points in 40 games. For any other player in the league those are some good numbers but not Alexander Ovechkin standards, especially when he's used to 100 plus seasons every year. Arch-rival Sidney Crosby on the other hand has had the complete opposite year recently going on a 25 game point streak where he collected 50 points. He has a league leading 65 points and 32 goals on the year in just 40 games.



# Comics

Last Ditch Effort / John Kroes



## Solution

9	5	2	8	6	7	3	1	4
1	3	6	9	4	5	2	8	7
7	4	8	3	1	2	6	5	9
8	7	4	5	3	6	1	9	2
5	9	1	4	2	8	7	3	6
6	2	3	1	7	9	5	4	8
4	6	5	7	8	3	9	2	1
3	8	7	2	9	1	4	6	5
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Thurs, Jan 6, 11-2 pm or until we run out

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### Tournament

Wed. Jan.5

Noon-4pm

Prizes:

1st = pool cue

2nd = t-shirt



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Your play time will be e-mailed to you.

Prizes: 1st = PS3 game, 2nd= t-shirt

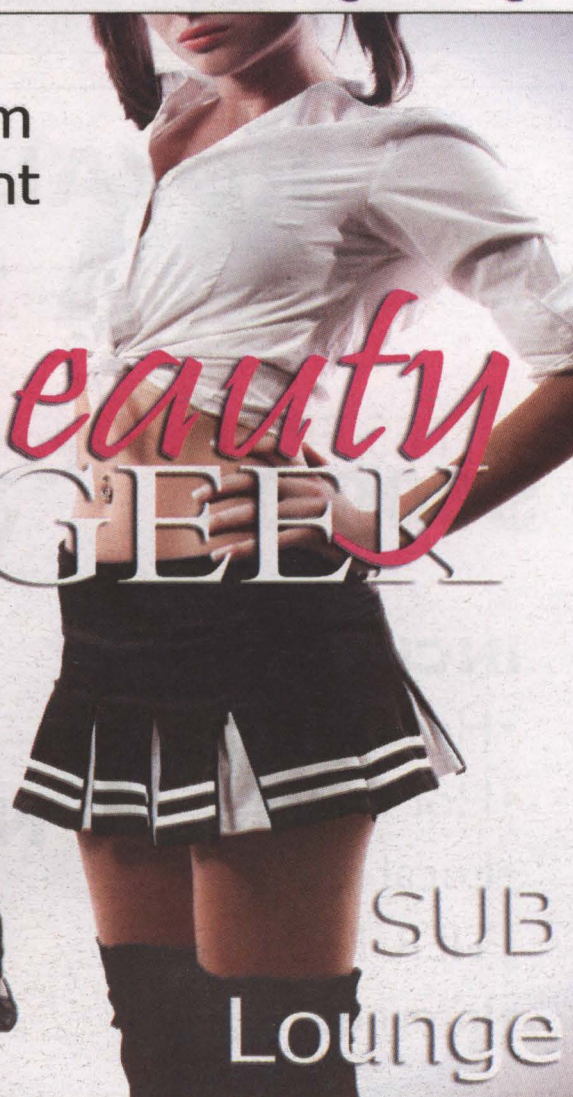
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